

# Former Margaret Stancomb Infant School Trowbridge Wiltshire

*Archaeological Evaluation*



for  
EG Carter & Co Ltd

CA Project: CR0093  
CA Report: CR0093\_1

August 2019



# Former Margaret Stancomb Infant School Trowbridge Wiltshire

## Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: CR0093  
CA Report: CR0093\_1



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A	24 July 2019	Paolo Guarino	Alex Thomson			Cliff Bateman

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Former Margaret Stancomb Infant School
<b>Location:</b>	Trowbridge, Wiltshire
<b>NGR:</b>	385487 158367
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	22-23 July 2019
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	WC ref; 18/10554/FUL
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Trowbridge Museum
<b>Site Code:</b>	SIST19

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in July 2019 on land at the former Margaret Stancomb Infant School, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. Five trenches were excavated.

The remains of probable garden features and a wall were recorded in the west and north-east of site respectively, all of which correlate with features shown on late 19th century mapping. The remains of modern structures associated with the recently demolished school buildings were also recorded.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 2019 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for EG Carter & Co Ltd on land at the former Margaret Stancomb Infant School, Trowbridge, Wiltshire (centred at NGR: 385487 158367; Fig. 1). Planning permission for the redevelopment of the site was granted by Wiltshire Council (WC; ref: 18/10554/FUL), conditional of a programme of archaeological work (Condition 11). The first stage of archaeological works, as recommended by Rachel Foster, Assistant County Archaeologist, WC, comprised the current archaeological evaluation.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2019) and approved by Rachel Foster. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014).

### ***The site***

- 1.3 The proposed development area is 0.5ha in extent and comprises the site of the recently demolished school buildings as well as associated hardstanding and playground areas. The site is bounded to the north by a retirement living facility and Trowbridge Community Hospital, to the east and west by residential properties, to the south-west by further residential and commercial properties and to the south-east by British Row.
- 1.4 The site lies at approximately 42m AOD, and slopes gently downwards towards the north-west, and drops sharply in level towards British Row to the south-east.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as mudstone of the Kellaways Formation, formed during the Jurassic Period (BGS 2019). The natural substrate recorded during the course of the evaluation consisted of yellow clays.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development site has not been previously subject to archaeological assessment. However, the town of Trowbridge and the surrounding area has been

subject to a number of archaeological surveys. The following is a relevant summary of publicly obtainable information.

- 2.2 Evidence for early prehistoric activity in Trowbridge and the surrounding area is limited. Pits and postholes containing Bronze Age pottery were identified some 400m south of the site during the excavation of the castle (Graham and Davies 1993, 16).
- 2.3 Scatters of Early Neolithic flint, as well as Roman ditch enclosures, were identified by CA during an evaluation at Ashton Park, 1.3km south of the site.
- 2.4 Further Roman activity is recorded within the surrounding area; the majority of Roman activity within Wiltshire consists of villas and roadside settlements along the number of important Roman roads which cross the county, the closest being the Bath to Silchester road, approximately 8km north of site.
- 2.5 Trowbridge is generally considered to be Saxon or early medieval in origin and likely existed as a small agricultural settlement around a wooden bridge which crossed the River Biss approximately 400m south-west of site; in fact, the town's name derives from 'tree-bridge' (Halsam 1976, 61).
- 2.6 In the 12th century a motte and bailey castle was built near the river, with the later medieval settlement and associated burgage plots surrounding this. The current site lies immediately north of this settlement area, within the agricultural hinterland of the town (Halsam 1976, 61).
- 2.7 The current site has been occupied by a school since the early 19th century (Victoria County History 1953). Woodland, associated with Adcroft House located c. 100m to the north, is depicted within the central and western extent of site on the 1844-1888 First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping. A series of garden features, including a probable mound, are also depicted within the wooded area (see Fig. 6 of this report). By the 1930s the garden features (including the 'mound') were no longer depicted and the woodland had been incorporated into the school grounds and grounds of Trowbridge Community Hospital, located to the north of site (T & P 2018). Aerial photographs show a WWII air raid shelter immediately north of the current site, within the grounds of the hospital (Wiltshire and Swindon HER ref: MWI73731).

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance to *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable Wiltshire Council to identify and assess the particular significance of the heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of five trenches, each measuring 15m in length and 1.8m in width, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). During the course of the fieldwork, Trenches 1 and 5 were rotated slightly and Trenches 3 and 4 were moved in order to avoid on-site obstructions. All trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 The trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* but no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.4 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Trowbridge Museum, along with the site archive. A summary of

information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-6)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendix A and B.
- 5.2 The stratigraphic sequence identified across site was broadly uniform, with the natural geological substrate being observed at an average depth of 0.72m below present ground level (bpgl). Within Trench 5, the natural was sealed by c. 0.4m of undated made-ground 502 and a total of 0.6m of subsoil and topsoil. Within all other trenches the natural was immediately sealed by c. 0.35m–0.55m of modern made-ground, levelling deposits and associated overlying surfacing.
- 5.3 Archaeological features and deposits dating to the late post-medieval and modern periods were recorded in Trenches 1, 3 and 5. No archaeological features or deposits were identified within the remaining trenches, except for an undated tree throw pit in Trench 4. The recorded features correlate closely to the 1844-1888 First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping (see Fig. 6).

### ***Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 6)***

- 5.4 Identified within the centre of Trench 1, north-east/south-west aligned construction cut 107 contained wall 105 (Fig. 3). The wall, measuring at least 4m in length, 0.35m in width and 0.3m in height, was constructed of two courses of red brick on a concrete and stone footing. Whilst no dating evidence was recovered from the wall or the backfill of the construction cut, it correlates closely to structures depicted on the 1844-1888 Ordnance Survey mapping (see Fig. 6).

### ***Trench 3 (Fig. 4)***

- 5.5 Within the southern extent of Trench 3 two modern concrete footings, 303 and 306, were identified overlain by red brick walls 304 and 307 respectively (Fig. 4). Wall 304 was 2m in length, 0.4m in width and about 0.25m in height and wall 307 measured 2.2m in length, 0.4m in width and 0.1m in height. It is probable that these features relate to the recently demolished school buildings.



### **Trench 5 (Figs 5 and 6)**

- 5.6 Terrace cut 503 was identified at the northern end of Trench 5 (Fig. 5). Measuring at least 3m in length, 2m in width and 0.3m in depth and recorded as amorphous in plan, it contained silty-clay fill 504, from which eight fragments of pottery dating to the late 18th to 19th centuries were recovered, along with post-medieval tile fragments. This feature lies just to the south of the site of a probable 'mound' depicted on late 19th-century cartographic sources (Fig. 6).
- 5.7 In the southern extent of the trench three probable garden features were identified. Feature 505/509 was L-shaped in plan, and measured at least a total of 5m in length, up to 0.8m in width, 0.1m in depth and contained clay fill 506 from which a single sherd of refined whiteware, dating to the late 18th to 19th centuries, was recovered. Sub-circular posthole 507 was cut into the terminus of garden feature 505/509. It measured 0.4m in length, 0.3m in width and 0.15m in depth and contained silty-clay fill 508 from which a fragment of black basalt stoneware teapot, dating to the 18th to 19th centuries, was recovered. Located 0.8m to the west of feature 505/509 further garden feature 511 was identified, measuring 2m in length, 0.6m in width and 0.1m in depth and contained an undated silty-clay fill 512. The garden features identified within Trench 5 appear to be adjacent to the location of a small square structure shown on the 1844-1888 Ordnance Survey mapping (see Fig. 6), although no evidence for this structure was identified during the current works.

## **6. THE FINDS**

- 6.1 Artefactual material was hand-recovered from three deposits (fills of a posthole, a terrace and a garden feature). The recovered material dates to the post-medieval/modern periods and quantities of the artefact types are given in Appendix B. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric and fabric codes have been devised for the purpose of this report.

### **Pottery**

- 6.2 The pottery, all dating to the post-medieval and modern periods, totals 10 sherds (625g). Of post-medieval date are a Frechen stoneware bottle (FRE), which would have been imported from the Cologne area during the mid 16th to 17th centuries, a a sherd of mottled brown glazed ware (MBG), of late 17th to 18th century date and

the base of a Creamware vessel (CRM, mid to late 18th century). All were recovered from fill 504 within terrace cut 503. The remaining ware types are slightly later in date – refined whiteware dateable to the late 18th to 19th centuries (TRP, RWH), including an intact ointment jar in fabric RWH, and a rimsherd of black basalt stoneware (BBS), most likely from a teapot, of 18th to 19th century date, from fill 507 within posthole 508.

### ***Ceramic Building Material (CBM)***

- 6.3 Two fragments of ceramic building material of post-medieval date were retrieved from fill 504 within terrace cut 503. They are identifiable as pan tile and flat roof tile.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

- 7.1 The evaluation identified probable 18th to 19th century garden features in the south-west of the site and modern structural remains in the north-east.
- 7.2 The features identified in Trench 5, and the tree throw pit identified in Trench 4, correlate to 19th-century cartographic evidence, that depict this area as woodland within a landscaped garden/parkland associated with Adcroft House to the north (see Fig. 6). Terrace cut 503 may relate to the formation of a mound shown on historic mapping just to the north, with the excavated arisings from the identified feature possibly forming the mound. Furthermore, a relationship between garden features 505/509 and 511, identified in the southern extent of Trench 5, and the use or construction of a small outbuilding shown on the same late 19th-century mapping is also probable. The recovery of an artefactual assemblage from these features, dateable to the later 18th to the 19th centuries, further supports this interpretation although suggests that they may pre-date the First Edition Ordnance Survey map.
- 7.3 The wall identified in Trench 1 is consistent with the structures shown on historic mapping and probably correlates to an outbuilding related to the original school building shown on the 1844-1888 Ordnance Survey mapping (see Fig. 6).
- 7.4 Significant truncation was identified within Trenches 1-3, with the natural substrate generally being directly overlain by modern levelling material for the existing playground surfaces. The walls and footings identified in Trench 3 are probably

associated with the 20th-century re-modelling of the school, most of which has only recently been demolished.

## 8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Paolo Guarino and Luke Brannlund, assisted by Neus Esparza. The report was written by Paolo Guarino. The finds report was written by Jacky Somerville. The illustrations were prepared by Gemma Bowen. The archive has been compiled by Paolo Guarino, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Alex Thomson.

## 9. REFERENCES

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2019 *Geology of Britain Viewer* [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology\\_viewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html) Accessed 24 July 2019
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2019 *Former Margaret Stancomb Infant School, Trowbridge, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Investigation*
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- Halsam, J. 1976 *Wiltshire Towns: The Archaeological Potential*. Devizes, The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.
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- Victoria County History 1953 'Parishes: Trowbridge', *A History of the County of Wiltshire*, Vol 7 <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol7/pp125-171> Accessed 24 July 2019

## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/ Thickness (m)	Spot date
1	100	Layer		Surface	Tarmac	>15	>2	0.1	
1	101	Layer		Make-up/levelling	Hardcore	>15	>2	0.15	
1	102	Layer		Make-up/levelling	Grey-brown silty-clay	>15	>2	0.25	
1	103	Layer		Make-up/levelling	Hardcore	>15	>2	0.25	
1	104	Layer		Make-up/levelling	Hardcore			0.1	
1	105	Masonry	107	Wall	NE/SW aligned red-brick wall on concrete footing	>4	0.36	0.2	
1	106	Layer	107	Make-up/levelling	Grey-brown clay, mortar and stone	>4	0.36	0.1	
1	107	Cut		Construction cut	NE/SW aligned linear construction cut	>4	0.36	0.3	
1	108	Layer		Natural substrate	Yellow-grey clay	>15	>2		
2	200	Layer		Make-up/levelling	Gravel	>15	>2	0.2	
2	201	Layer		Make-up/levelling	Gravel	>15	>2	0.35	
2	202	Layer		Natural substrate	Pale yellow clay	>15	>2		
3	300	Layer		Destruction debris	Rubble	>15	>2	0.35	
3	301	Layer		Natural substrate	Grey-yellow clay	>15	>2		
3	302	Cut		Construction cut	Sub-rectangular construction cut	>2	>0.4		
3	303	Fill	302	Wall footing	Concrete	>2	>0.4		
3	304	Masonry	302	Wall	Red-brick	>2	>0.4	0.25	
3	305	Cut		Construction cut	Sub-rectangular construction cut	>1	>0.3		
3	306	Fill	305	Fill	Concrete	>1	>0.3		
3	307	Masonry	305	Wall	Red-brick	>1	>0.3	0.11	
3	308	Cut		Drain/Service	E/W aligned service	>2	>1		
3	309	Fill	308	Fill	Rubble	>2	>1		
4	400	Layer		Surface	Tarmac	>15	>2	0.1	
4	401	Layer		Make-up/levelling	Clinker, silt and rubble	>15	>2	0.3	
4	402	Layer		Subsoil	Grey-brown silty-clay	>15	>2	0.3	
4	403	Layer		Natural substrate	Grey-yellow clay	>15	>2		
4	404	Cut		Tree throw	Sub-circular tree throw pit	1	1		
4	405	Fill	404	Fill	Grey-brown silty-clay	1	1		
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey-brown clay silt	>15	>2	0.3	
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Dark grey-brown clay silt	>15	>2	0.3	
5	502	Layer		Make-up/levelling	Sandy-silt	>15	>2	0.4	
5	503	Cut		Terrace cut	Shallow sub-linear with concave sides and flat base	>3	>2	0.3	
5	504	Fill	503	Fill	Mid grey brown silty clay	>3	>2	0.3	LC18-C19
5	505	Cut		Garden feature	NW/SE aligned linear with rounded terminus, concave sides and base	>1.8	0.8	0.1	
5	506	Fill	505	Fill	Mid orange brown clay	>1.8	0.8	0.1	LC18-C19
5	507	Cut		Posthole	Shallow ovoid cut with steep sides and concave base	0.42	0.3	0.15	

5	508	Fill	507	Fill of post hole	Yellow brown silty-clay	0.42	0.3	0.15	C18-C19
5	509	Cut		Garden feature	NW/SE aligned linear with concave sides and base	>2	0.8	0.1	
5	510	Fill	509	Fill	Mid orange brown clay	>2	0.8	0.1	
5	511	Cut		Garden feature	E/W aligned linear with rounded terminus, concave sides and flat base	>1	0.6	0.1	
5	512	Fill	511	Fill	Mid grey brown silty clay	>1	0.6	0.1	

## APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 1: Finds concordance

Context	Category	Description	Fabric Code	Count	Weight	Spot-date
504	Post-medieval pottery	Creamware	CRM	1	25	LC18-C19
	Post-medieval pottery	Frechen stoneware	FRE	2	408	
	Post-medieval pottery	Mottled brown-glazed earthenware	MBG	1	11	
	Post-medieval/modern pottery	Transfer-printed refined whiteware	TRP	4	57	
	Post-medieval ceramic building material	Pan tile, flat roof tile		2	131	
506	Post-medieval/modern pottery	Refined whiteware	RWH	1	115	LC18-C19
508	Modern pottery	Black basalt stoneware	BBS	1	9	C18-C19

## APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Former Margaret Stancomb Infant School, Trowbridge, Wiltshire	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in July 2019 on land at the former Margaret Stancomb Infant School, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. Five trenches were excavated.</p> <p>The remains of probable garden features and a wall were recorded in the west and north-east of site respectively, all of which correlate with features shown on late 19th century mapping. The remains of modern structures associated with the recently demolished school buildings were also recorded.</p>	
Project dates	22-23 July 2019	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Former Margaret Stancomb Infant School, Trowbridge, Wiltshire	
Study area	0.5ha	
Site co-ordinates	385487 158367	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Wiltshire Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Alex Thomson	
Project Supervisor	Paolo Guarino	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Trowbridge Museum	Ceramics
Paper	Trowbridge Museum	Field recording sheets and drawings
Digital	Trowbridge Museum	Digital photos, report
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2019 <i>Former Margaret Stancomb Infant School, Trowbridge, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report <b>CR0093_1</b>		



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0  1km

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**Cotswold Archaeology**

Andover 01264 347630  
Cirencester 01285 771022  
Exeter 01392 573970  
Milton Keynes 01908 564660  
Suffolk 01449 900120  
[www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)  
[enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

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**PROJECT TITLE**  
Former Margaret Stancomb School,  
Trowbridge, Wiltshire

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**FIGURE TITLE**  
Site location plan

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<b>CHECKED BY</b>	<b>GBJ</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>29/07/2019</b>	
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	<b>PG</b>	<b>SCALE@A4</b>	<b>1:25,000</b>	<b>1</b>



- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature (unexcavated / excavated)
- Structure (unexcavated / excavated)
- Modern
- Tree throw pit



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 Exeter 01392 573970  
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 Suffolk 01449 900120

www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk  
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

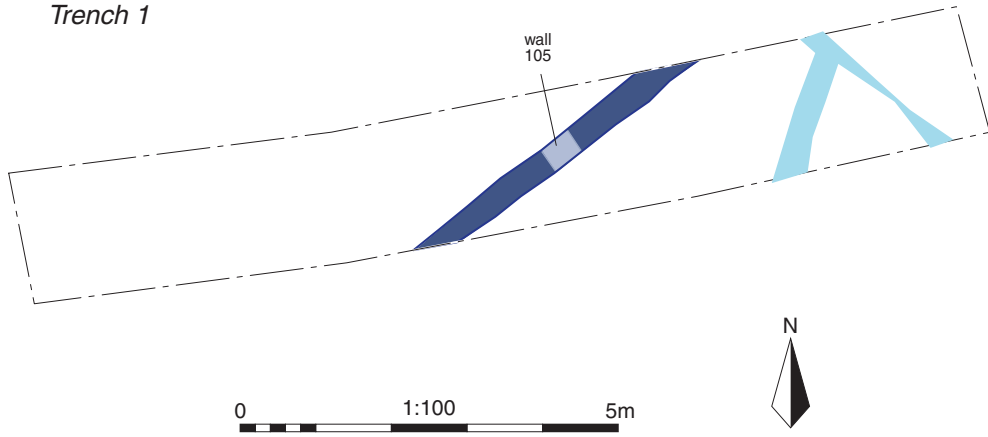
**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Former Margaret Stancomb School,  
 Trowbridge, Wiltshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench location plan, showing  
 archaeological features




<small>DRAWN BY</small> GB	<small>PROJECT NO.</small> CR0093	<small>FIGURE NO.</small> 2
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<small>APPROVED BY</small> PG	<small>SCALE@A3</small> 1:400	



Trench 1



Wall 105, looking south-west (1m scale)

-  Evaluation trench
-  Structure (unexcavated / excavated)
-  Modern



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 Suffolk 01449 900120  
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[enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

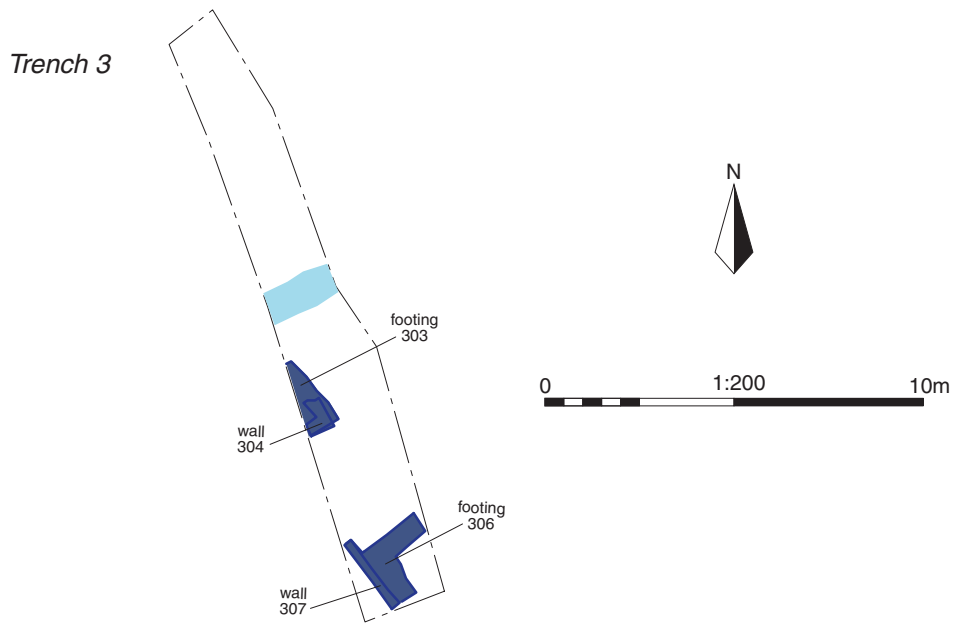
PROJECT TITLE

Former Margaret Stancomb School,  
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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 1: plan and photograph

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Footing 306 & wall 307, looking east-west (1m scale)

-  Evaluation trench
-  Structure (unexcavated / excavated)
-  Modern



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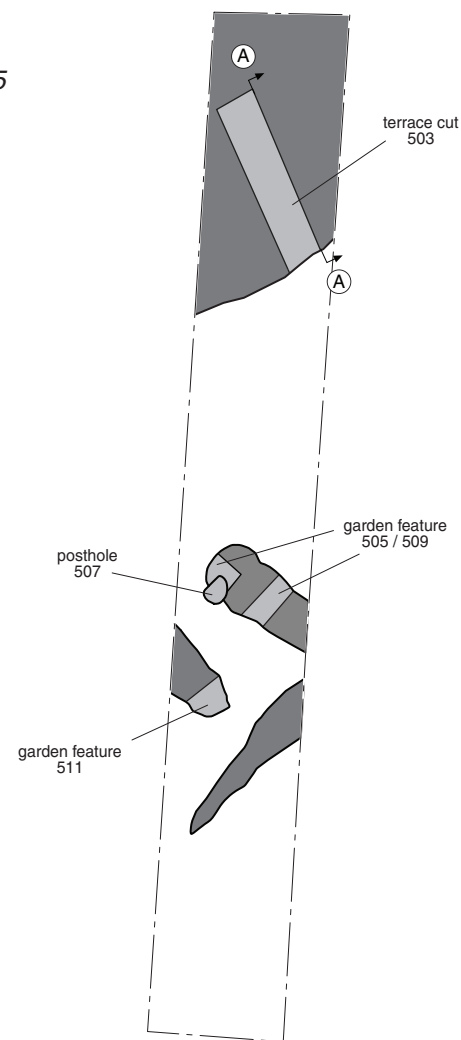
Former Margaret Stancomb School,  
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FIGURE TITLE

**Trench 3: plan and photograph**

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APPROVED BY	PG	SCALE@A4	1:200	<b>4</b>

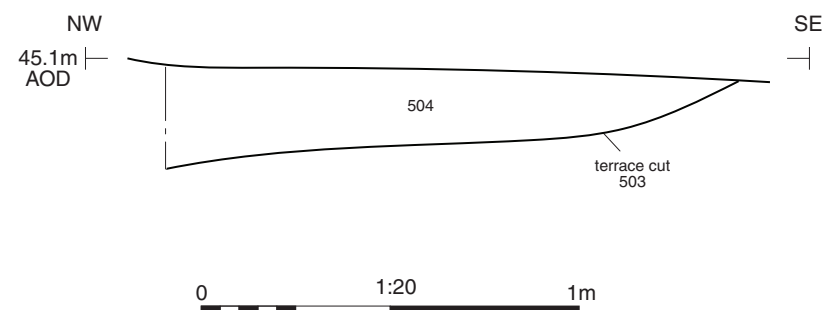
Trench 5



0 1:100 5m



Section AA



0 1:20 1m



Garden features 505 and 511, looking south



Terrace cut 503, looking south (1m scale)

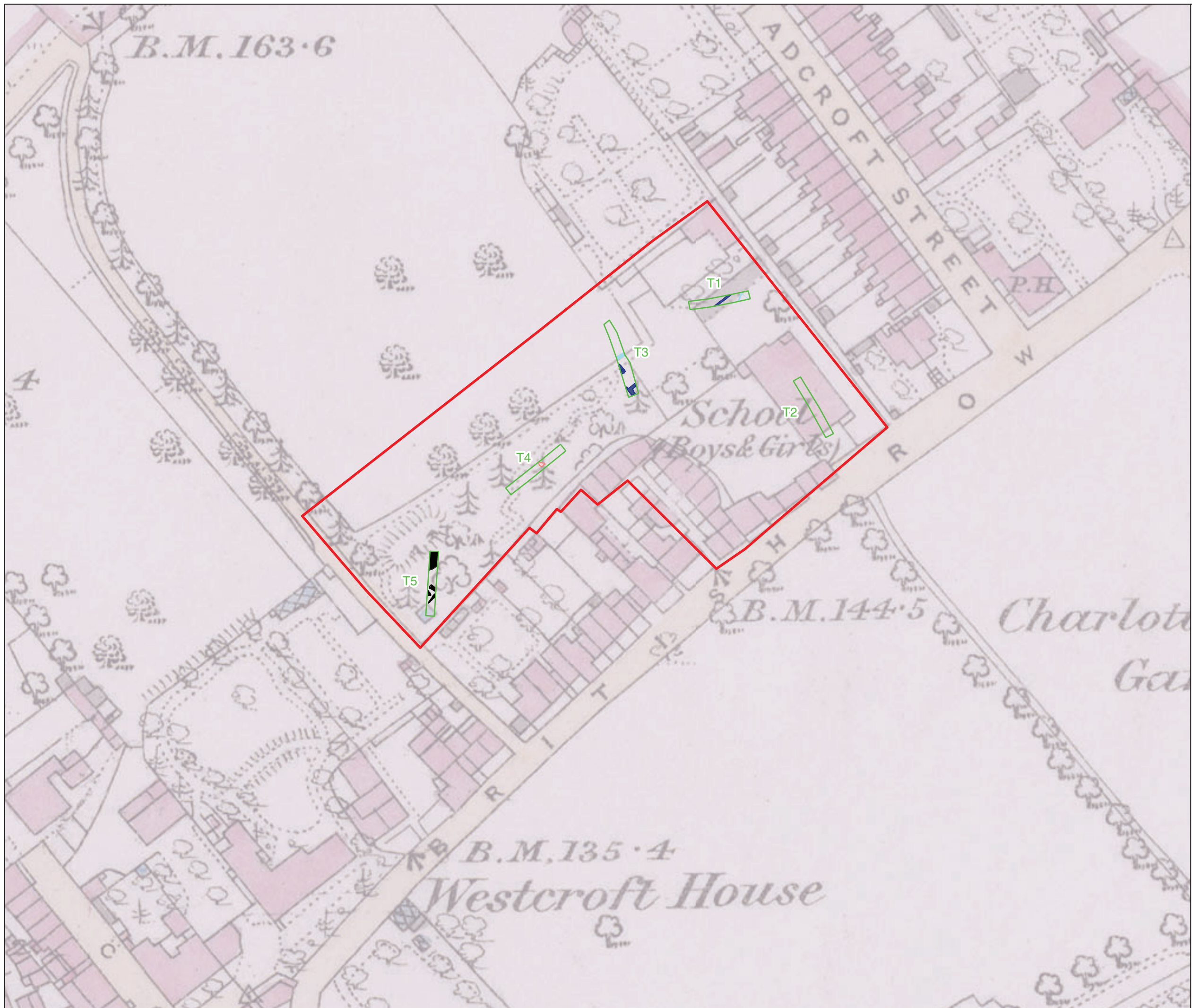
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature (unexcavated / excavated)

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 Cirencester 01285 771022  
 Exeter 01392 573970  
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660  
 Suffolk 01449 900120  
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk  
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

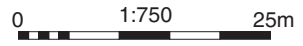
PROJECT TITLE  
 Former Margaret Stancomb School,  
 Trowbridge, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench 5: plan, section and  
 photographs**

DRAWN BY	GB	PROJECT NO.	CR0093	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	29/07/2019	5
APPROVED BY	PG	SCALE@A3	1:100, 1:20	



- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature
- Structure
- Modern
- Tree throw pit



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[Andover 01264 347630](tel:01264347630)  
[Cirencester 01285 771022](tel:01285771022)  
[Exeter 01392 573970](tel:01392573970)  
[Milton Keynes 01908 564660](tel:01908564660)  
[Suffolk 01449 900120](tel:01449900120)  
[www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)  
[enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

**PROJECT TITLE**  
Former Margaret Stancomb School,  
Trowbridge, Wiltshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
Trench location plan, overlain on the  
First Edition Ordnance Survey map

<small>DRAWN BY</small> GB	<small>PROJECT NO.</small> CR0093	<small>FIGURE NO.</small> 6
<small>CHECKED BY</small> DJB	<small>DATE</small> 29/07/2019	
<small>APPROVED BY</small> PG	<small>SCALE</small> @A3 1:750	

#### **Andover Office**

Stanley House  
Walworth Road  
Andover  
Hampshire  
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

#### **Cirencester Office**

Building 11  
Kemble Enterprise Park  
Cirencester  
Gloucestershire  
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

#### **Exeter Office**

Unit 1, Clyst Units  
Cofton Road  
Marsh Barton  
Exeter  
EX2 8QW

t: 01392 573970

#### **Milton Keynes Office**

Unit 8 - The IO Centre  
Fingle Drive, Stonebridge  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire  
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

#### **Suffolk Office**

Unit 5, Plot 11, Maitland Road  
Lion Barn Industrial Estate  
Needham Market  
Suffolk  
IP6 8NZ

t: 01449 900120

e: [enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

